

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: MUNICIPAL SHARED SERVICES

DATE: JANUARY 30, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Supervisors O'Connor
VanNess
Belden
Tessier
Merlino
Sokol

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Supervisor Sheehan

OTHERS PRESENT:

Representing the City of Glens Falls
Judy Villa-White, Ward II, Common
Council
Josh Milton, Recreation Superintendent
Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Todd Lunt, Director, Human Resources
Francis X. O'Keefe, Treasurer
Supervisor Stec
Supervisor Champagne
Supervisor Strainer
Supervisor Kenny
Supervisor Girard
Nicholas Caimano, Adirondack Regional
Chamber of Commerce (ARCC)
Thomas Randall, The Adirondack Journal
Barbara Bennett, Town of Lake Luzerne
Debra L. Schreiber, Sr. Legislative Office
Specialist

Mr. O'Connor called the meeting of the Municipal Shared Services Committee meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Merlino, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Since the last Board of Supervisors meeting on January 18, 2008 and the Glens Falls Common Council meeting, Mr. O'Connor apprised that he had been ill and had not had the opportunity to fulfill the obligations he promised.

Messrs. Caimano, Stec and Champagne and Mrs. Barbara Bennett, entered the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor explained how the original Municipal Shared Services Committee was established under the former City of Glens Falls Mayor. While the original project never came to fruition, he said, the Committee continued to meet at the request of the Mayor until the former Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, William H. Thomas,

made this Committee a standing committee. He stated the Municipal Shared Services Committee had no funding or operating budget, nor did it have a Department Head.

Messrs. Girard and O'Keefe entered the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor suggested the Supervisors from the City of Glens Falls and Common Council members meet more frequently. Mr. O'Connor apprised that Jeff Farley spoke about the Amsterdam Mohawks Baseball Team at a meeting of the Common Council, and he recently received an email from him, *a copy of which he distributed to all members of the Committee.*

Referring to the list of pending items, Mr. O'Connor said members of the Committee requested a tour of the East Field property; however, he suggested, the tour be postponed until the availability of funding had been determined. With respect to the second pending item, he said the Committee asked Paul Dusek, County Attorney, to research the acquisition of either a portion or all of East Field.

Mr. Caimano exited the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

Mr. Belden acknowledged that he was a strong supporter of the City of Glens Falls and the projects they undertook; however, he said, he would like to tour East Field to determine what renovations would be required. If this project were assumed by the County, he recommended it be proposed during the Budget process.

Due to the condition of the bleachers, Mr. O'Connor said, a recommendation had been made that they be torn down. He further stated that the locker rooms and concession stand hadn't changed since their last tour and also necessitated significant improvements.

Pursuant to the last Glens Falls Common Council meeting, Mr. O'Connor said he was supposed to contact Patricia Tatich, Director of the Planning & Community Development and Mr. Dusek to determine what grant funds might be available, as well as the terms of acquisition. He reminded the Committee that Senator Betty Little and Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward supported their efforts to improve East Field.

A discussion ensued.

Mr. O'Connor asked if any members of the Committee objected to meeting at night in the City of Glens Falls and there was no objection. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, said it was his understanding the Municipal Shared Services Committee was incorporated to share services between individual municipalities and the County and not limited to just the City of Glens Falls. Therefore, he questioned whether changing the meeting location would have a negative

impact. Since the inception of this Committee, Mr. O'Connor stated no municipality had approached Warren County requesting to share services and it was his experience that most municipalities negotiated the terms amongst themselves.

A discussion ensued.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Tessier, Mr. O'Connor commented he only suggested hosting the meetings at night in Glens Falls to accommodate a majority of the Common Council members and City of Glens Falls Supervisors.

Mr. Belden suggested the County apply for a Smart Growth Grant as they would be more successful than the City of Glens Falls in receiving the monies to improve East Field. Mr. O'Connor commented that he felt that a majority of the Common Council Members and Supervisors would rather share the services of East Field first, as opposed to the Glens Falls Civic Center.

Mr. O'Connor queried whether Mrs. Villa-White had the opportunity to discuss the status of East Field with Ronald L. Newell, attorney for the City of Glens Falls. She replied she anticipated scheduling a meeting with Mr. Newell and Mr. Dusek, to discuss the options of East Field as they related to the City of Glens Falls and Warren County. She noted the Glens Falls Common Council voted unanimously to negotiate a contract with Warren County to take over East Field and she understood until the legal issues were resolved, no further action would be taken. Upon an executed contract by all parties, Mrs. Villa-White said they would be happy to tour the grounds of East Field, compile a list of capital improvements and gather the necessary quotes so the County would be fully informed.

A discussion ensued.

Mr. Champagne commented he was not a member of the Committee but a supporter of shared services between municipalities; however, he said, he was unsure what was prohibiting the County from taking over East Field from the City of Glens Falls to make it a viable operation. If the County assumed East Field, Mr. Tessier asked what the City of Glens Falls would contribute to the shared services.

Mr. VanNess said it was his understanding the original concept was to share the services between the City of Glens Falls and Warren County by attaching the County name to the grant application so the City would be more successful in its requests for funding. He said it was his further recollection that Mayor LeRoy Akins was joking when he said "The County could purchase East Field for \$1;" therefore, he suggested, the County Attorney contact the City Attorney to determine how they (City of Glens

Falls) could apply for a municipal shared services grant to assist them in making the necessary improvements to East Field. If they were successful in receiving grant funds and the necessary improvements were made, Mr. VanNess said the City might decide they did not want the County to take over the East Field. Mr. O'Connor said it was his belief the original concept of the County being the lead agency on any grant application had never changed

A discussion ensued.

In terms of shared services, Mr. O'Connor stated if they received some funding from Warren County perhaps the City of Glens Falls could mow the lawn; however, he said, the lawyers would need to negotiate the terms. Mr. VanNess said it must still be determined whether it was possible for the Warren County/Glens Falls/East Field Committee to apply for a grant without the County becoming the owner of such property, which he understood was a request made by this Committee to the County Attorney and, to date, a response had not been received.

Mr. Belden noted June 30, 2008 was the application deadline for the shared services grants. He said today was the first time he heard the Glens Falls Common Council was willing to relinquish East Field to the County. Mr. Kenny commented he agreed with the Chairman that these Municipal Shared Service Committee meetings should be held in the evening in the City of Glens Falls. Until all the capital projects and their associated costs had been identified, he said no one would know how receptive the full Board of Supervisors would be to taking over East Field.

Josh Milton, Recreation Superintendent, City of Glens Falls, stated when he spoke with the County Attorney, he was advised of the following three (3) options:

- 1) transfer of absolute ownership;
- 2) leasing the field to the County; and
- 3) subsidizing by the County.

If the City were willing to relinquish East Field to Warren County, Mr. Milton said the County Attorney advised that the appropriate paperwork must be submitted by February or March 2008 in order for the NYS Legislature to approve it before they recessed in June.

Mr. Champagne asked a member of the Committee to bring forth a motion requesting the County Attorney contact the City Attorney seeking answers to the questions raised during this meeting and to report his findings to Mr. Payne. After listening to these discussions, he said it was his belief the legal opinions of counsel would assist the Committee in their decision process.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. VanNess requesting the County Attorney and City Attorney negotiate various management/ownership options and

alternatives as they relate to East Field.

A discussion ensued.

After discussion, Mr. O'Connor called the question and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Payne announced that in November 2007, the City of Glens Falls, voted to abolish their Civil Service/Personnel Office, meaning that responsibility would now be assumed by the County. According to the New York State Civil Service Department, he said, there were approximately 1,000 City, school and library employees that would be managed by the County Personnel Office, which he anticipated would result in their Department eventually submitting a request to create another position.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. VanNess, Mr. O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber
Sr. Legislative Office Specialist